



Episode 427 – Why Martial Artists Aren't Demoted | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



### Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello thanks for coming by, this is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 427. Today, were talking about why martial arts we don't demote people. My name is Jeremy Lesniak your host for the show founder of whistlekick and a guy who just loves martial arts so I've made it my life. If you wanna check out all the things that I'm investing my time into making along with a wonderful team, you can head on over to [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) check out everything we've got going and there's a store and if you make a purchase in the store and use the code `podcast15` you're going to save 15% off everything. You can save anytime, any product, clearance, brand-new, doesn't matter what it is. Check it out, use it over and over again, show some love for the show help us justify the expense that we put into making this show. We bring you two episodes a week, we've been doing that for over four years and it's been a wonderful way to connect with the martial arts community and meet people and it's just been awesome so thank you for your support. If you want to see more about the show including transcripts, photos, links, all that, [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) that's the place to go. You can see everything we've ever done related to the show for free, videos, it's just, there's a ton there, so go check it out.

If your longtime listener to the show you know that I will quite often get something off my chest with one of these Thursday episodes or maybe I'll explore an idea that's been popping up in recent episodes and that's kind of what today is. One of the things I found myself saying, not too much on the show but off-line, is about this idea that martial arts rank is not directly tied to skill it can be but it isn't and how do I prove that the fact that as people get older and their skills fade



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we don't demote them look at this way let's imagine you start martial arts in your teens, your 20s at the peak of your physical health and you can do a lot of things, you learn a lot a skill and you advance and achieve high rank and that carries on for 10-20 years but then at some point your skills start to fade because your age increases. As we get older, there are things that we can't do or at least can't do as well. So, if we achieve that rank based on the skill in our peak physical health, why don't we demote people as they start to lose those skills, it's obvious, because rank in martial arts is based on something beyond skill. In fact, in many, maybe even most schools, the people that we most revere are those with knowledge people who are older who have been training for a long time, whose skills are nowhere near what they used to be. And you know what, I think that's right because at the heart of it martial arts is about getting better, it's about progressing, it's about personal development. And physical skill, yeah that's part of it, but it's not the only part of it and I would even say it's a minor part of it.

Can you imagine the martial arts would look like if we started to demote people? Who's going to do that, is it going to be the lower ranks? That would be ridiculous. Hey Sensei, all of us have gotten together and agree that you're not as good as you used to be so were going to demote you from 6 degree to fourth. That would be silly right that would never happen. Would it be people who are of higher rank, probably not, because they've probably suffered the same loss of skill as the person that were talking about, so that's not going to happen. Is someone going to independently demote themselves, that would be weird. So where would that come from? Nowhere. It's not going to come from anywhere and I think that that's correct. Now why is this concept important? It's important because it blows up the arguments that so many people make about someone not having skill at a certain level that an observer feels they should have oh you should be able to punch better than that so you don't deserve that whatever rank you have. That form should be better. Sounds stupid, I hate it. I hate that stuff. Because martial arts when we reward we reward progress, growth and that growth comes from different starting points. Different people come into martial arts for different reasons, there are different places in their lives they have different amounts of time and energy they can dedicate to their training, they have different goals. But fairly consistently regardless of the school, regardless of the style, as they get better in whatever way you might be able to judge that, their rank increases. They are promoted to symbolize outwardly that effort and that growth. Everyone has different standards, every school has different standards, different people have different ideas of what constitutes a certain rank or minimum physical standards and that's fine. I'm a big believer that martial art school should be able to do things differently in the way that works for them that's going to attract different students and produce different results. That's great, I'm a free market, capitalist sort of guy especially when it comes to martial arts. I don't want anybody saying no you can't do that. But there are plenty of people out there who are criticizing others skill and saying you don't deserve that rank that is an appropriate etc. Etc.

And this, this whole idea of not having demotions is my counterargument. So, I will go on record as to say rank has virtually nothing to do with physical skills. The only reason it has any correlation of physical skill is the effort to improve and maintain them. At one point we had an



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episode where we talked about what does it mean to be a martial artist and to be a martial artist is someone who he is actively or intends to be actively training again. Why do we have to have that caveat, because sometimes people get hurt and I'm not going to tell someone they're not a martial artist because they've been late up with two broken legs for six weeks, eight weeks more. Feels unfair for me to judge them in that way because they plan to start training again. But when they come back, their skill has reduced they haven't been training, should we demote them? Probably not. So, I share this with you because I want you to use this argument the next time you're having a conversation with someone where the other person is saying that so-and-so doesn't deserve rank or so-and-so skills are as good as this other person so they should be higher, any of that.

I want you to share this, I want you to have some conversation about it and I would love your feedback. So, come on over to [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) episode 427 let me know what you think. Are there holes in my argument that I've missed? Show me. Do you have another way of looking at it that might be equally valid? I enjoy conversation about the stuff, so I want to get more feedback, more opinions. Help me grow, as the person who hosts the show, by sharing your opinions with me. If you have something you don't want to share publicly, email me [Jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:Jeremy@whistlekick.com). If you want to follow us on social media, we are at whistlekick all over the place. Don't forget [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) podcast15 gets 15% off the store and any help and support that you can show whistlekick and the show is greatly appreciated. Until next time. Train hard, smile, and have a great day.